711.40973
C42m
cop.2

Harold M. Mayer
Chicago: City of Decisions
(1955)

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://www.archive.org/details/chicagocityofdec00maye

711.40973
C42m
cop.2

I11-16
60

THE
GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO:
City of Decisions

By

HAROLD M. MAYER

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

FRONTISPIECE. Downtown Skyline from Burnham Park. *Harold M. Mayer*

THE GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF CHICAGO

PAPERS ON CHICAGO NO. 1

CHICAGO: *City of Decisions*

By

HAROLD M. MAYER

University of Chicago

Edited by

CHAUNCY D. HARRIS

THE GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF CHICAGO
7 South Dearborn Street
Chicago 3, Illinois

3

Copyright 1955

by

The Geographic Society of Chicago

711.40973
C42m
no. 2

FOREWORD

Chicago is a vibrant and growing city. Its rise to leadership in the Middlewest reflects both the potentialities of its geographical situation and the imagination, foresight, and energy of its citizenry.

Chicago is located at the southwesternmost penetration of the Great Lakes into the rich and productive agricultural heart of America. Lake transport played a role in the settlement of city and region. It is important today for movement of goods into or out of its hinterland or for assembly of bulky raw materials for manufacturing, as in the steel industry. The Great Lakes also affected the rise of Chicago to its equally significant position as the greatest railroad center in the world. Rail lines from the west focused on Chicago as the nearest point of water transport. Rail lines between the Northeast and the Northwest are compressed by the barrier of Lake Michigan into a band around the southern end of the lake. These lines funnel into Chicago. Based on the strategic position for transportation, Chicago has developed as a thriving commercial, cultural, and industrial metropolis.

But the nature of this growth depended in large part on the vision and industry of its leaders. Professor Mayer tells the story of five critical decisions of the past that have made Chicago what it is today. He also clarifies the nature of three decisions now facing the citizens of the city; the actions on these decisions will influence the type and quality of the city tomorrow.

The material in this publication has been adapted from two talks delivered by Professor Mayer in commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the Department of Geography of the University of Chicago.

Publications Committee

Newton C. Farr

Clyde F. Kohn

Chauncy D. Harris, *Chairman*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. HAROLD M. MAYER is Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of Chicago. He received his B.S. from Northwestern University in 1936, his M.S. from Washington University, St. Louis, in 1937, and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1943. During the years 1940-1945 he held various positions with the Chicago Plan Commission. From 1945 to 1948 he was Chief of Research, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, and from 1948 to 1950 was Director of Research, Chicago Plan Commission. He has been on the faculty of the University of Chicago since 1950. He has also served as Lecturer in Geography at the University of Pennsylvania (1947-1948) and at Northwestern University (1949-1950). During 1952-1953 he was a member of the Chicago Regional Port District Board.

Dr. Mayer has written extensively on Chicago. He has contributed to *Forty-Four Cities in the City of Chicago* (Chicago Plan Commission, 1942); *The Calumet Industrial District: Preface to a Comprehensive Development Plan* (Chicago Plan Commission, 1942); *Residential Land Use Master Plan of Chicago* (Chicago Plan Commission, 1943); *Where Two Great Waterways Meet,* The First Bennial Report of the Chicago Regional Port District Board, 1953; and *The Calumet-Sag Navigation Project, Illinois-Indiana,* A Statement to the Public Works Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations, U. S. House of Representatives, 84th Congress, First Session, May, 1955.

In addition he has written the following articles on Chicago: "Patterns and Recent Trends of Chicago's Outlying Business Centers," *Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics,* Vol. 18 (February 1942), pp. 4-16; "Localization of Railway Facilities in Metropolitan Centers as Typified by Chicago," *Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics,* Vol. 20 (November, 1944), pp. 299-315; "The Railway Terminal Problem of Central Chicago," *Economic Geography,* Vol. 21 (January, 1945), pp. 62-76; "Great Lakes-Overseas, An Expanding Trade Route," *Economic Geography,* Vol. 30 (April, 1954), pp. 117-143; and "Prospects and Problems of the Port of Chicago," *Economic Geography,* Vol. 31 (April, 1955), pp. 95-125. He is also author of *The Railway Pattern of Metropolitan Chicago* (1943).

Chapter I

DECISIONS AFFECTING THE GROWTH AND LAYOUT OF CHICAGO

A generation ago Professor J. Paul Goode's famous lecture "Chicago: City of Destiny" postulated that Chicago was destined to grow as the great Metropolis of the Midwest. In his view this growth was predetermined by the characteristics of the region for which Chicago serves as the principal focus: fertility of its soils, the productivity of its agriculture, the great mineral resources, the transportation routes, and the vitality of its population.

But the destiny of a city is not predetermined. The development of Chicago is the result not only of the tremendously rich resources of its region, but also of the specific decisions which have been made throughout its history. Nature offers opportunities. Man decides when and how to utilize them.

These decisions are of two types. First is the individual decision which one makes when he decides where to live, or where to operate his business, or where to go to school. The second type is the social or collective decision, the decision made by a large business organization, or by Federal, State, and local government.

In the past, Chicago has been subject to and has made many decisions which have carried it toward its destiny as the Metropolis of the Midwest. We have selected, more or less arbitrarily, five of the more important decisions which have been made in the past. They are:

1) the system of land survey adopted by the Federal government in 1785;

2) the selection of the site of Fort Dearborn;

3) the decisions of the railroads to come to Chicago and to make the city their major midwestern terminal;

4) the decision to have a comprehensive Plan of Chicago developed by Daniel H. Burnham and his colleagues; and, finally,

5) the decision to set up planning as a continuous operation in Chicago.

1. The Land Survey System

The first of these decisions, the Federal land survey, was responsible for the rectangular pattern of land subdivision and of roads. This system is an outstanding characteristic of development and settlement in the Midwest. It set the pattern for the city streets, the flow of traffic, the location of shopping centers, and also the arrangement of lots and parcels of land upon which the building of the city has taken place.

The section lines which mark the boundaries of the square-mile land sections have determined the locations of the principal city streets, carrying most of the vehicular traffic and a major portion of the surface public transit.

Along these section-line streets, which are a mile apart both east-west and north-south, long ribbons of commercial land use developed along the streetcar lines. In places near the intersections of these section-line streets, major traffic arteries, the commercial centers develop cross-shaped patterns, the most intensive development being nearest the intersections. Literally hundreds of miles of these section-line streets in all parts of the city have been set aside by custom, and later by the zoning ordinance of 1923, for commercial development.

The area zoned for commercial use in Chicago far exceeds the requirements of the population. As a result, many miles of frontage along the major traffic streets in Chicago have not been developed for any use, even though in many instances a dense residential development lies in the immediate neighborhood. Furthermore, such ribbon type of commercial development has encouraged construction of too many commercial buildings, sometimes with dwellings above stores; many of these buildings have not been absorbed by economic commercial uses; many of them house only marginal businesses, which frequently fail. The result has been a rather sloppy, haphazard, attenuated development. Miles upon miles of these commercial ribbons are dense near the major intersections but fade out rapidly into vacant areas or intermittent development along the section-line streets between the mile intersections.

These patterns were frozen by the zoning ordinance of 1923, which was one of the very early comprehensive zoning ordinances in this country. In fact, the constitutionality of zoning had not been established by the Supreme Court of the United States until three years after the passage of the Chicago ordinance. A poor ordinance in several respects, it is now in the process of a thorough-going revision. One badly needed revision is to scale downward the amount of frontage zoned for business, so that it becomes more proportionate to the actual needs for commercial land.

The ribbon commercial zoning discouraged the development of planned integrated shopping centers of the modern type. Some such modern centers

have been and are being developed, however, on and beyond the edge of the city. They compete effectively with the older shopping areas closer to the center of the city. The modern planned shopping center is becoming very common on the fringes of most American cities. But in Chicago, because of the inheritance from the past of a tradition of long ribbon development, the building of modern shopping centers comprehensively planned with adequate areas for parking and with good layout of shops has been delayed.

Chicago's street pattern in the residential areas is also characterized by a rigid rectangularity. This rectangularity increases the difficulty of development of new neighborhoods or the redevelopment of old neighborhoods to embody the principles of modern city planning. The modern planned neighborhood unit, whether it is a redeveloped neighborhood in a former blighted area or a new development on the edge of the city, does not have every street as a through street. In Chicago there are typically eight blocks to the mile in one direction and sixteen in the other. For many years this rigid pattern has been required by city ordinance. In suburban areas it is generally possible to depart from the rigid rectangularity and to develop streets which are curved, with offsets and culs-de-sacs that discourage noisy and hazardous through traffic moving through the residential areas. Children enroute to the community or neighborhood schools do not have to be confronted with dangerous traffic. The shopping center and the other neighborhood foci are more readily accessible. The neighborhood has a more attractive appearance.

Thus the Federal land subdivision pattern, inherited from as far back as 1785, represents a decision of the past which is continuing to have important effects upon the pattern and development of Chicago through the various changes in transportation from buggy to surface streetcar to bus and private automobile. The laying of streetcar tracks on the streets, their later removal with the coming of buses, and the flexibility of private cars, however, have altered the relationships of these section-line streets.

2. The Site of Fort Dearborn

The second decision chosen for discussion is the selection of the site at the mouth of the Chicago River for Fort Dearborn, the predecessor of Chicago.

Chicago is unique among the major cities of North America in that it straddles the drainage divide between the two most important inland waterway systems of the continent, the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River system. Two routes pass through present-day metropolitan Chicago across the divide. The northern of these routes was once known as the Chicago Portage and the southern as the Calumet Sag. In glacial times these routes were the drainage outlets of the Great Lakes. At the time of early exploration in the Chicago region, the northern of the two routes, the portage,

FIG. 1. Map of Chicago in 1830. This map shows the subdivision of the area of the city into mile-square sections. Alternate sections were reserved as canal lands to pay for the original Illinois and Michigan Canal. *Chicago Historical Society.*

was followed by the French explorers, traders, and missionaries. Marquette and Joliet in 1673 envisioned the possibility of a canal across the divide, opening up the vast midwestern hinterland which later become the Chicago region.

In 1795 the Indians ceded six square miles at the mouth of the Chicago River, which, as the entrance to the portage route, then had to be protected by a military outpost.

In 1827, a canal traversing the Chicago portage between the Chicago River, flowing into Lake Michigan, and the Des Plaines River, flowing into the Mississippi system, was being promoted. The alternate sections of land which were designated as canal lands were to produce revenues from their sale, such revenues to be used for the financing of the construction of the canal.

In 1830, Chicago consisted of a few log cabins just outside Fort Dearborn at the mouth of the Chicago River (Fig. 1). It extended intermittently for about a mile westward from Lake Michigan to the Forks, where the north and south branches of the river come together near the present Merchandise Mart. The center of what is now the City of Chicago had already been platted and subdivided in accordance with the pattern established by the Federal survey systems into rigid mile rectangles, with dedicated section-line roads around the borders of each rectangle.

In the same year that Chicago became incorporated as a village, 1833, the Federal government was engaged in its first improvement project affecting navigation in the area: the removal of a sand bar which threatened to close the mouth of the Chicago River.

The Illinois and Michigan Canal, upon which construction was begun in 1837, was opened in 1848. The original water connection across the old Chicago portage became a commercial reality.

The strategic location of the region had been utilized to make Chicago a focus of water transportation. Soon the canal was followed by railroads, but the freight traffic on the canal held up until well into the 1880's. The canal served to lower the freight rates, and thereby more effectively connect Chicago, not only by canal but by rail as well, with its Midwest hinterland.

By 1900 the route of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was closely paralleled by the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which also cut across the drainage divide. The Chicago river originally flowed into Lake Michigan, but untreated domestic, industrial, and municipal sewage carried by the river threatened to pollute the city water supply which then, as now, was derived from the lake. The Sanitary and Ship Canal reversed the flow of the Chicago River. This canal in 1933 was connected with the Lakes-to-Gulf Waterway, giving Chicago an outlet to the Gulf of Mexico and connecting it with a 7,000-mile system of Federally improved river

barge routes stretching from Pittsburgh to Omaha, from Minneapolis to New Orleans and to the Mexican border. Traffic coming to Chicago via this route last year exceeded 18 million tons and constituted about one-third of the total traffic of the harbors and inland waterways of metropolitan Chicago.

The location of Fort Dearborn and its successor, the City of Chicago, at the southwesternmost penetration of the Great Lakes into the Midwest made Chicago a convenient port of entry for settlers and their supplies and a shipping port for agricultural produce. The lakeside location of Chicago is of vital significance also to its steel industry. Metropolitan Chicago now surpasses Pittsburgh in volume of steel production. Its plants produce more steel than is produced in any single country other than the United States and the Soviet Union. This production depends upon water transportation for getting ores from the Lake Superior area, limestone from northern Michigan, and part of the coal from the area to the southeast of Lake Erie (Fig. 2).

Since 1933 Chicago has enjoyed direct all-water services to and from overseas ports. In 1954 twelve steamship lines operated about 60 small liners on regular schedule, with 216 sailings. In 1955 the number grew to nineteen, with about 100 ships, and over 300 overseas sailings scheduled.

Chicago is the terminal of the enlarged St. Lawrence Seaway. Within four or five years, large ocean freighters will be at the city's doorstep. The realization of the full potentialities of this route will involve vastly better general cargo terminals than now exist. The development of facilities at Lake Calumet, upon which construction was begun in October 1955, marks the beginning of a new era of expansion of Chicago's water-borne commerce.

The Calumet-Sag Channel, finished in 1922, connects the Calumet industrial area with the system of waterways of the Mississippi Valley. The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, farther north, is a more adequate connection, but it reaches the wrong place, for downtown Chicago is not the area in which the development of the heavy industries is likely to take place; heavy industries stimulate large tonnages of water-borne commerce. The Calumet-Sag Channel is a 60-foot-wide waterway, far too small for the needs of modern commerce (Fig. 3). Its enlargement was authorized by Congress in 1946, but the first appropriation was not made until 1955. Work on the enlargement of the channel has recently started. With completion of this project Chicago's waterway connection with its Midwest hinterland will be vastly improved.

That the original site of Chicago was indeed strategic is evidenced by the fact that the central business district, the Loop, has always been relatively strongly anchored. It has not migrated as have the business districts of many other cities with the decline of water transportation in their

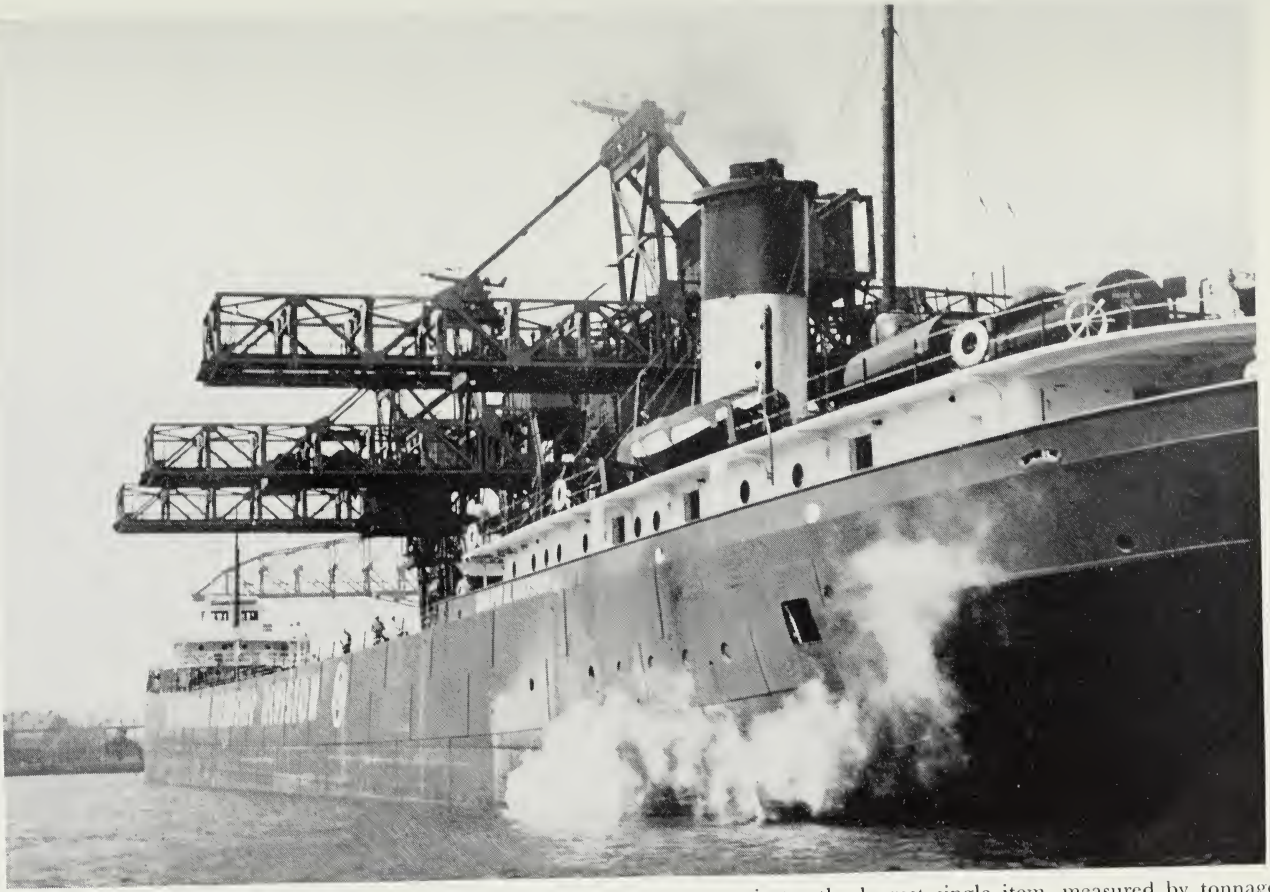

FIG. 2. Unloading of ore vessel in the Calumet River. Iron ore constitutes the largest single item, measured by tonnage, in the waterborne commerce of the Port of Chicago. *Harold M. Mayer*

FIG. 3. Barge in the Calumet-Sag Channel. This channel is Chicago's principal connection between the Calumet district and the Mississippi River system. Only 60 feet wide, it is inadequate for the needs of modern commerce. Enlargement was begun, as a Federal project, late in 1955. *Harold M. Mayer*

regions. The center of gravity of the Chicago Region is still the central business district of Chicago. In spite of the deconcentration toward the edge of the city of many of its functions, simply because of lack of room at the city center, the Loop is still the major focus of the Chicago Region. Thus the location of Fort Dearborn was a strategic decision which had much to do with the subsequent economic and physical development of Chicago and the Chicago Region.

3. The Coming of the Railroads

The third great decision of the past which has had vast consequences for the present and future of Chicago was the group of decisions by the railroads to focus upon Chicago as their major Midwestern center. Chicago, as is well known, is the largest railroad center in the world: 250 freight yards, 6 major passenger terminals, four million carloads of freight per year, and 26 major trunk-line railroads.

The first railroad to serve Chicago, the Galena and Chicago Union, was planned at the same time as the Illinois and Michigan Canal. In 1848 it was opened for the first fifteen miles as a feeder connecting the Des Plaines River and the area beyond with the Chicago River and with Great Lakes shipping.

At that time there was no direct eastward rail connection from Chicago. But two railroads across southern Michigan, the northern one the Michigan Central and the southern one the Michigan Southern, both now parts of the New York Central System, were racing westward to bridge the gap between Lake Erie and Lake Michigan. By 1850 one of them had reached New Buffalo, Michigan, where freight and passengers were transferred to lake steamboats for completion of the trip to Chicago. The first two main-line railroads connecting Chicago with the east were conceived as feeders to the water routes.

To avoid the long detour around the southern peninsula of Michigan, which was necessary by water, the first east-west connections were made by rail in 1852. They were fought by many interests which feared that if the eastern lines were connected with the lines to the west, the transshipment trade would be lost to Chicago, and that Chicago could be superseded by some other point as the major focus of the Midwest. Nevertheless, the Michigan Central connected with the Illinois Central at Kensington, some twelve miles south of the central part of Chicago, as the latter road was being extended toward Chicago in 1852. At the same time, the Michigan Southern was connected with the Chicago and Rock Island at Englewood, seven miles south of the city, as the latter road was being pushed toward the west. Kensington and Englewood did not, as was feared at the time, replace downtown Chicago as the major focus of the Midwest.

When the Illinois Central was being planned into Chicago the state

legislature authorized it to come as the Chicago Branch. The "main line" connects with East Dubuque, on the Mississippi River. The lakefront property owners, learning of the Chicago Branch proposal, fought the original plan for a route to enter the city along the South Branch of the Chicago River. They felt that if the railroad were to be built along the lakefront, they would thereby be relieved of the necessity of maintaining breakwater protection for their property. Now, of course, those properties are a half mile from the lake. Almost ever since the construction of the railroad, the people of Chicago have wished that the decision relative to the route had been otherwise than along the lake. North of Hyde Park, however, the railroad did serve the purpose of expensive lake protection and both north and south of Hyde Park it did stimulate suburban development.

The first through railroad service to the east was in 1856, when the predecessor companies of the New York Central and the Pennsylvania were connected at Buffalo and at Pittsburgh respectively. Before 1860 Chicago was enjoying through service to New York and to other eastern cities. Since those days, the Chicago-New York axis has been the most important route, not only for rail, but also for highway and air traffic. Chicago is the western anchor of the major nodal axis of American transportation.

Finally, in 1869, the Galena and Chicago Union, now part of the Chicago and North Western system, had extended westward to the east bank of the Missouri River at Council Bluffs, Iowa, where it connected with a bridge built by the Union Pacific. The latter railroad had flung its rails westward across the continent to meet the Southern Pacific extending eastward from San Francisco Bay. Thus, by 1869 Chicago was the principal gateway and interchange point on the first transcontinental railroad route.

Each of the railroads wished to enter Chicago by the most direct feasible route. Originally most of the lines were feeders to the water routes. The main port development was along the Chicago River and its two branches. Each of the railroads sought to develop its terminal as close as possible to the central business district and the surrounding manufacturing and wholesale area, as well as to the terminals of lake and canal traffic. There simply was not enough room in central Chicago for all the railroads to locate their facilities downtown. The lines which were among the last to enter were either forced to make joint trackage agreements with the existing railroads, or to come into the city over very circuitous routes, such as those of the Baltimore and Ohio and the Grand Trunk Western.

By 1886 all the existing downtown passenger terminals or their earlier counterparts were in existence at or near their present sites. The tracks formed a ring of steel around the central business district, confining the expansion of the core of Chicago on the south and west.

Ever since then, persistent efforts have been made by the city to consolidate the South Side rail terminals. These efforts have been to no avail, because the requirements of the growing city have changed. The earlier endeavors were justified in large part by the hope that release of railroad land would facilitate the construction of through streets connecting the central business district with the South Side. No longer is it considered desirable that every street southward be a through street. The modern planned expressways have made obsolete the old idea that railroad terminal consolidation south of the Loop was necessary to provide more streets. Passenger traffic on the railroads faces an uncertain future. The railroads are unwilling to make large commitments for the additional expenditures unless one of two objectives is achieved: either a reduction of the operating expenses or an increase in their passenger traffic. It is perfectly obvious that the proposed complete consolidation of the South Side railroad terminals, by whatever plan, is not economically feasible for the railroads. It is also obvious that public funds are not available to accomplish this purpose in the forseeable future.

The railroads have been great civic assets. They have sponsored many developments to the mutual advantage of the carriers and the city. The Union Stock Yards were founded in 1865 and were developed by the railroads, which previously had seven stock yards in various parts of the city. It was then considered desirable to consolidate the stock yards beyond the city limits; the railroads selected the area between 39th and 47th streets, which today is the center of the municipal area of the City of Chicago.

The belt lines, coming for the most part in the 1880's and the 1890's, facilitated interchange among the twenty-six trunk-line routes that by that time had reached the City of Chicago; they made all of the lines accessible to each other. These belt lines, furthermore, sponsored the idea of organized industrial districts; the Clearing Industrial District and the Central Manufacturing District furnished a model for the rest of the world. These districts and belt lines together stimulated the expansion of the economic base of Chicago.

The present railroad pattern of the City of Chicago is cellular or rectangular (Fig. 4). One can see by a glance at a railroad map what the limits of the built-up area were at the time the railroads first entered. Those limits mark the outer edge of the strictly rectangular pattern, where the railroads conform to the city street pattern. Beyond, they take the most direct routes to other cities.

Within the cells bounded by the railroads and their accompanying industrial belts the residential areas of the city developed. There are seventy-five recognized residential communities within the city, each with a certain degree of homogeneity and individuality; the cell walls of the urban protoplasm are the railroads and the ribbons of industries alongside them.

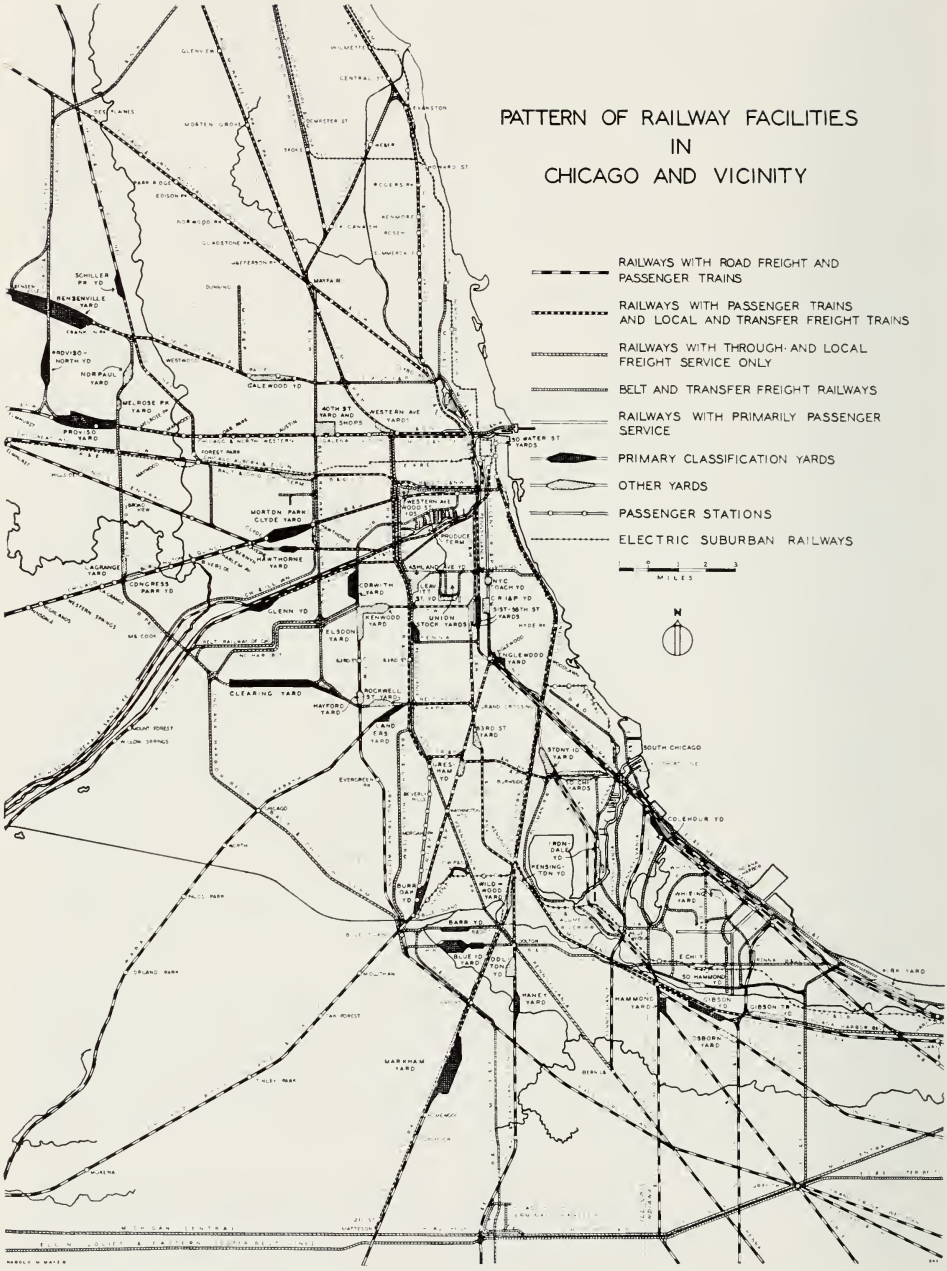

FIG. 4. Pattern of Railway Facilities in Chicago and Vicinity. The cellular pattern of railway lines in Chicago is clearly evident. From *The Railway Pattern of Metropolitan Chicago,* by Harold M. Mayer, 1943.

Thus the railroad pattern of Chicago, arising out of the decisions of the railroads in the 1850's and subsequently, constitutes a major element of the urban pattern.

4. The Burnham Plan

The fourth major decision was the determination on the part of the citizens of Chicago to authorize and to publish a comprehensive plan: the famous Burnham Plan of Chicago of 1909. The Burnham Plan introduced comprehensive city planning to Chicago and to the nation. Although published in 1909, its roots were deep in the traditions of history. Baron Haussmann, who developed the boulevards of Paris for Louis Napoleon, furnished a good part of the inspiration which was expressed in the city beautiful movement that dominated city planning in those days.

Civic planning was not new in Chicago. Even early in its history Chicago planned boldly. Prior to the Burnham Plan Chicago had connected two drainage basins and reversed the flow of the Chicago River, had earlier raised itself twelve feet out of the mud by lifting the downtown buildings and streets, and had effectively developed as an industrial center. In 1869 it boldly recognized that a movement toward the suburbs was under way; it laid out an outer belt system of boulevards and parks, now well inside the city. Later it planned some of the world's model industrial districts. In 1871, after the Great Fire, it planned to rebuild, although some of the rebuilding was unfortunately along antiquated lines . In the 1880's it gave birth to the skyscraper. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 was a landmark in Chicago's civic history. It inspired a seeking for order and beauty in planning for the entire city, not just for the Fair. The city beautiful movement then was under way.

The Commercial Club of Chicago published the Burnham Plan of Chicago; it immediately attracted wide attention. Many of the outstanding features of present-day Chicago were either proposed or furthered by the Plan: the continuous lakefront park development, the widening of the major section-line streets to accommodate a greater volume of traffic, and the outer line of forest preserves along the river valleys.

The Plan of Chicago of 1909 was metropolitan in scope. It was bold. It was comprehensive in accordance with the advanced concepts of the time. Furthermore, its publication was preceded and followed by good public relations.

It had, nevertheless, very serious limitations: stress upon the monumental; the relative neglect of housing and residential area development; and the lack of foresight relative to the manifold effects of the automobile, which even then was in the offing. But the Burnham Plan was a civic endeavor of world-wide significance, and it had important effects upon the present city pattern.

5. The Establishment of Planning Agencies

The fifth decision was to organize planning as a permanent operation. The Burnham Plan stimulated the development of two quasi-public organizations to effectuate its proposals: the Chicago Regional Planning Association and the Chicago Plan Commission.

The Chicago Regional Planning Association does valuable work with individual counties and municipalities in a fifteen-county region centering on Chicago. It pushed the forest preserves and the development of a highway system. It promoted many plans for water supply and sewage disposal systems. It became an important agency in spreading the gospel of zoning in its region. But the Chicago Regional Planning Association, in spite of its name, is not concerned with comprehensive regional planning. Nor is it directly concerned with the City of Chicago, the core of the region. It is only incidentally concerned with city-regional relationships. It is not, in other words, a comprehensive planning agency.

The second of the agencies created shortly after publication of the 1909 Plan of Chicago was the Chicago Plan Commission, which was to operate inside the city. It was created as a major agency to effectuate the Burnham Plan. It published the Wacker Manual, which educated two generations of local school children relative to city planning. The Wacker Manual was a noteworthy civic textbook. Many of the children who used the Wacker Manual have subsequently become civic leaders. In the 1920's, largely as a result of the promotional activities of the Chicago Plan Commission, the citizens of Chicago approved bond issues of many hundreds of millions of dollars for projects proposed in the Burnham Plan, including the lakefront development, the Michigan Avenue improvement and subsequent development of the Near North Side, Wacker Drive, and many others. The Plan Commission, as it existed between 1910 and 1939, however, was a promotional agency; it was not a real planning agency.

The depression years of the nineteen thirties produced a worldwide awareness of the responsibilities of government on all levels, both national and local, for activities which had not previously been considered of public concern. Housing programs, the treatment of the spreading blight and slums, comprehensive land-use planning, zoning, and other concepts were outside the interest, and to some extent outside the competence, of the old Chicago Plan Commission. In order to tackle the galaxy of new problems, an official comprehensive planning agency in Chicago was considered necessary; it was to be comparable to those which were effective in most other cities by that time. In 1939 the Chicago Plan Commission was made an official agency, the planning arm of the City of Chicago advisory to the city government. But it, too, was not a comprehensive planning agency, because its area of concern was officially limited to the municipality. We were still without a comprehensive planning agency for the geographic, as distinguished from the municipal, city of Chicago.

Late in 1955 two potentially significant metropolitan-wide investigations are under way. One is an official study of problems of inter-governmental coordination being made by a state-appointed commission. The other is a metropolitan planning study to be made under the auspices of the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council, an unofficial citizens' group.

Thus each of these five critical decisions—the adoption of the rectangular system of land survey by the Federal government; the selection of the site of Fort Dearborn; the decisions of many railroads to make Chicago their midwestern terminal; the production of the Burnham Plan of Chicago; and the establishment of planning agencies—has played a role in the shaping of the Chicago of today. Many of these decisions have had ramifications and implications only dimly perceived at the time they were made. But what is past is prologue. Let us look to the future and to some of the problems now awaiting decision and resolution.

Chapter II

DECISIONS CONFRONTING CHICAGO TODAY

As Chicago enters upon a new period of expansion of its functions as the major focus of the Midwest, it must re-examine its ability to perform that role, in terms of both its present assets and its future potentialities and problems.

The ability of Chicago to serve effectively as the core of its region depends upon its ability to meet the problems of its economic, social, and physical development in such a manner as to produce a city which offers both the efficient performance of its economic functions and the amenities of a good life.

Chicago needs to make decisions relative to the use of land and to the transportation facilities which interconnect the land uses, so that each decision, whether made by an individual, by a business organization or other group, or by the people as a whole through their governments, may be properly related to other decisions.

The decisions now faced by Chicago may be as potentially important for its future as have been the major decisions of the past for its present. The necessity for these decisions arises in part from the evolving role of Chicago and partly as a result of the effects of past decisions.

We have selected only three of the complex problems that now call for careful study and wise decisions: the guiding of the expansion of the city, renewal of deteriorating neighborhoods, and the integrated development of transportation facilities.

1. Expansion of the City

One group of major decisions which must be made relates to the guidance of the expansion of the city. How shall the right uses of land be provided for in the right amounts and in the right places? Public agencies need to plan and zone so that enough land is made available for business and industry, but not so much as to encourage excessive and wasteful dispersion. Land must also be set aside for the development of the right kinds of housing and neighborhood facilities. Each of the many groups of people and types of families will have needs to be met. Opportunities for the kind

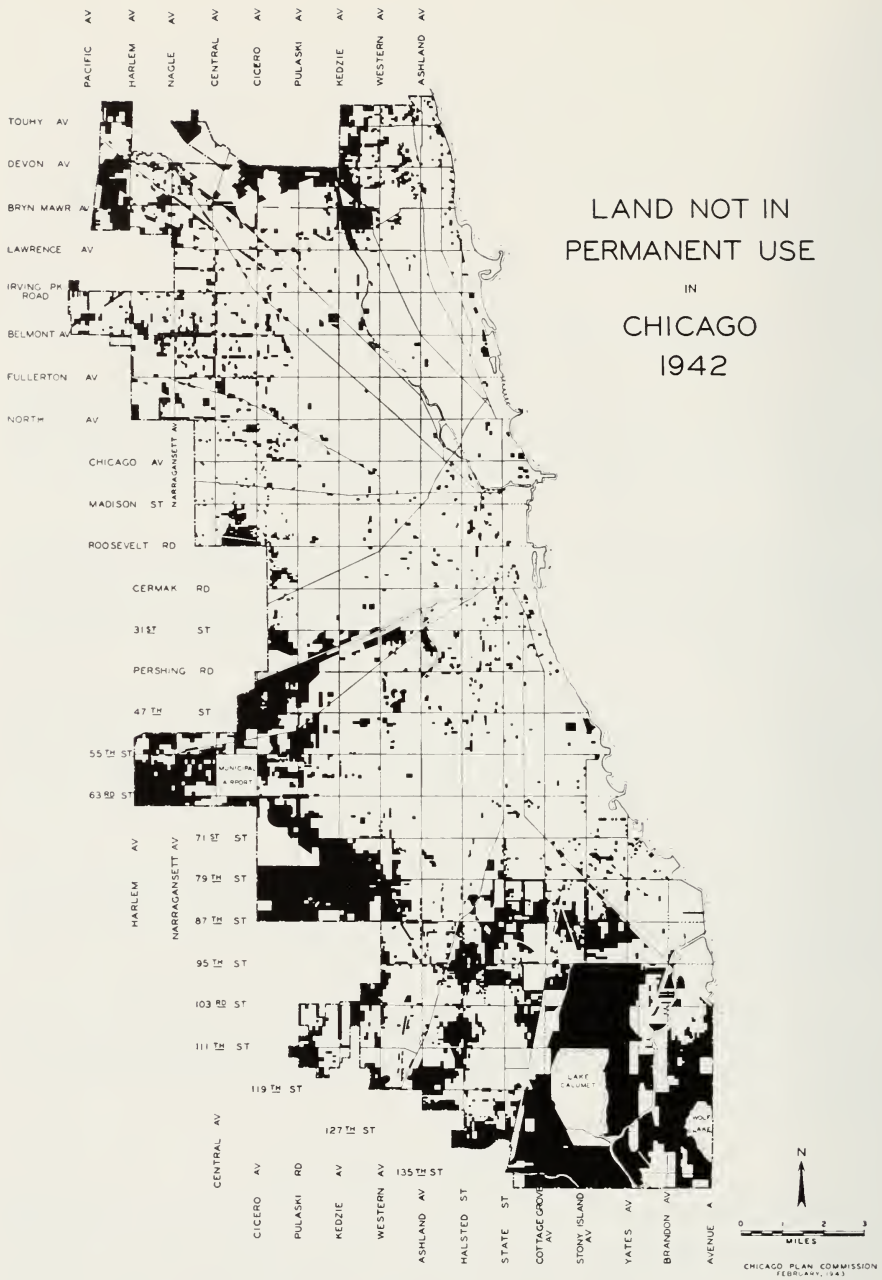

FIG. 5. Land Not in Permanent Use in Chicago, 1942. The three principal areas within the city in which large-scale development on formerly vacant land has been taking place within the last decade are: (1) the Calumet district on the far south side, site of a comprehensive port and industrial development now under construction, (2) southwestern Chicago, now largely occupied by single-family residences and by industry, and (3) far northwestern Chicago, now occupied by homes. Originally published in *Master Plan of Residential Land Use of Chicago,* Chicago Plan Commission, 1943.

of living which they desire must bear some relationship to the type they can afford. Urban expansion must be anticipated if it is to proceed in an orderly and efficient manner.

New industrial districts are arising on the outskirts of the metropolitan area, where large tracts of land can be cheaply assembled for the construction of extensive one-story horizontally aligned factories set amid spacious grounds with parking lots. Such industrial areas are arising on north, west, and south. Skokie is a good example.

Within the municipal limits of Chicago about a decade ago there remained only three principal areas of vacant land where expansion of residence and industry could take place (Fig. 5).

The largest area of land then vacant within the city was located at the south end, in the Calumet district. Nearly twenty square miles of land within the city and additional land outside the city then awaited development. Most of that land is still available but extensive utilization of the land for port, industrial, and residential purposes is about to occur. Developments include the St. Lawrence Seaway, which will bring large ocean freighters to the Calumet district by 1959, the enlargement of the Calumet-Sag Channel, which will link the Calumet areas more effectively with the Mississippi River system of barge waterways, and the plan of the Chicago Regional Port District for a comprehensive industrial development and port terminal in Lake Calumet. Here lies the junction of the two great inland waterway routes, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence and the Illinois Lakes-to-Gulf waterway. The nature of the development of this land will involve a series of decisions that will vitally affect the future of the city and the metropolitan area.

The second major area of vacant land which existed within the City of Chicago a decade ago was in the southwestern part of the city. This land is now filling up rapidly; virtually no area in that general part of the city has not been subdivided and placed upon the market for active residential construction. The southwestern part of the City of Chicago and adjacent suburban areas have suffered for several decades because of the relative inadequacy of public transportation. But public transportation is no longer essential for the urbanization of an area. Many industries have located nearby. Furthermore, the workers in the southwest of Chicago have good automobile access not only to industries in the nearby area but also to those elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

The third area, in the northern portion of the city, has had a similar recent history. The wave of peripheral expansion to the northward and northwestward has engulfed it.

Since nearly all the available land for residential expansion in the City of Chicago has been occupied, future growth must take place largely beyond the municipal limits of the city.

The average population density in the central parts of many of our cities has been decreasing for some time. The average density in the City of Chicago—the municipal area of the central city—is about 17,000 persons per square mile. It has been increasing near the edge of the city but decreasing in many areas close to the center. The population has been spilling over the municipal boundaries of Chicago; in sharp contrast to the situation in many other American cities, annexation of suburban areas to Chicago has been negligible in recent decades.

The automobile has made possible a much wider spread than was heretofore possible. It has made available vast areas beyond the confines of the older cities for urban development, for open space, and for residential development at lower densities than could be conceived for cities in earlier periods.

Another consideration relative to the potential deconcentration of Chicago and other cities is brought to the fore by the changing requirements for defense. Earlier cities had to be crowded together in order to minimize the defense perimeter, the city wall. Many persons and some Federal agencies believe that modern cities must be deconcentrated for defense. Immediately after the atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was thought by some that critical targets should be at least four miles from each other. Later the minimum distance was believed to be ten miles. Various provisions of the Federal government were intended to encourage strategic industries to locate at least that distance apart. Such policies have generally been unsuccessful, however, because of the economic advantages of closer spacing within metropolitan areas. Now, the experiences with hydrogen bomb tests indicate that virtually no amount of dispersion will constitute adequate defense. Even granted the desirability, which is now doubtful, great reductions in urban density cannot easily or quickly be achieved. Many people feel that if we must disperse the cities of the future in the light of technological development of the weapons of war, we may as well not live in cities, or even try to have a civilization. There is no easy answer to the question of dispersion. Defense, however important it may be, is but one among many considerations affecting the deconcentration of cities.

Many problems arise in unguided urban expansion. One of these problems is premature subdivision. The real estate market operates in cycles of boom and depression, or, at least, had done so until the late nineteen thirties. In boom times there was a speculative fever. Many subdividers in the late twenties butchered the land on the urban periphery, but they were unable to bring the new subdivisions into the urban real estate market because there simply was not sufficient demand for the hundreds of thousands of small lots that were created. Many such lots were developed in accordance with plans that are now considered to be obsolete in this day of rapid automobile transportation and express highways. Many of them provided inadequately for the necessary community facilities and such

amenities as schools, parks, playgrounds, and churches. Sites in most suburban subdivisions were not reserved for such use.

Many of the excessively subdivided areas have a high proportion of tax delinquency. In some cases the original owners have lost interest in the land, and, in fact, cannot even be traced now. Some such premature subdivisions have been reclaimed and development resumed, but the patterns of home building in such areas are generally far from ideal.

Expansion of public transportation through such areas is difficult because they provide insufficient traffic; hence provision of transportation into areas beyond often is not economically feasible.

Many of the new suburbanites have been forced to go beyond the municipal boundaries because of the lack of readily available land for residential construction within the incorporated limits of city and suburb. They have moved into the unincorporated parts of the metropolitan area. They are free from many kinds of municipal regulations relating to building; they are in areas where the minimum building and zoning standards are very low. They do not enjoy the benefits of municipal utility and protective services. They commonly do not enjoy adequate schools for their children, for unincorporated settlements very often have an insufficient base to support an adequate tax revenue.

In the suburban areas, whether incorporated or unincorporated, there is a multiplicity of local governments, including numerous *ad hoc* or special purpose governments, many of them with taxing powers. Such governments include sanitary districts, drainage districts, and mosquito abatement districts, in addition to the better known special governments such as school districts and park districts. In the suburban areas governmental stratum rests on governmental stratum. None is comprehensive in its powers or resources. The solutions of the problems of suburban and metropolitan governmental organization, a basic prerequisite to effective metropolitan planning, constitute a challenge. The decisions as to how the problem is to be met will have considerable bearing upon the future of metropolitan Chicago.

An attempt has been made recently in the Chicago Metropolitan Area to develop a Garden City; a new satellite town essentially along the lines originally conceived by Ebenezer Howard in England (Fig. 6). This is Park Forest, a post-war development with a present population of nearly twenty-five thousand, and a planned ultimate population of about thirty-five thousand. It has been successful in providing its residents with many amenities which, unfortunately, they have been unable to find in the central sprawl of Chicago or the immediately contiguous older suburbs. It is surrounded by a green belt, some of which is permanently dedicated as a forest preserve. But Park Forest, up to now, has failed to develop any significant industrial activities within its boundaries. It does have a note-

FIG. 6. Area of Rental Housing, Park Forest. This Community is one of metropolitan Chicago's largest postwar suburban developments. It incorporates some of the best modern thinking about neighborhood unit planning, but suffers from a location far from the employment of its residents and from extreme homogeneity of their economic, social, and age status.

Harold M. Mayer

worthy planned modern shopping center, but that source of employment is relatively unimportant in contrast with the dormitory suburban function which Park Forest has assumed. Long miles of commuting twice each day, taking over an hour in each direction to and from the centers of employment in Chicago, is the lot of the Park Forest breadwinner. The concept of Park Forest was good; the execution is incomplete, and the future of Park Forest presents a challenge. Whether Park Forest and other similar developments can constitute a significant part of the answer to the question of metropolitan Chicago's future remains unanswered.

Suburbanization, and with it the decisions relative to the organization of planning activities to guide it into desirable patterns, constitutes the first of the major problems which Chicago must currently face.

2. Urban Renewal

The second major problem is that which is now officially called "urban renewal." In reality it is an extension of the earlier concepts, first of "slum clearance" and later of "urban redevelopment."

In 1941-42 the staff of the Chicago Plan Commission prepared a map showing a semicircular blighted area nearly surrounding the central business district and extending out for an average of about four miles (Fig. 7). Immediately outside it an additional area was at that time designated as "near blighted." Much of the then near-blighted area has subsequently become blighted. At the time of the Plan Commission study there were about 23 square miles of blighted and near-blighted residential area in the City of Chicago. By 1955 this had increased to more than 50 square miles.

Redevelopment of the blighted and near-blighted areas with private capital alone poses difficult problems. These areas are characterized by obsolete buildings on small lots in scattered ownerships, a high degree of chronic tax delinquency, and congested occupancies and conversions of large dwelling units into small ones, often without minimum sanitary and other facilities, and sometimes illegally.

The Chicago Land Clearance Commission was created in 1947 to deal with this problem. It has initiated a number of large-scale redevelopment projects involving, in each case, scores of acres in which buildings are being either demolished or rehabilitated. The Land Clearance Commission has the power to assemble blighted land by using eminent domain (condemnation) where necessary. It can clear the land, rehabilitate structures, or both, and can sell or lease to private or public redevelopers at a price which is competitive with the vacant land on the edge of the city.

Several large projects were under way by 1955. The first and most spectacular is the Lake Meadows project on the Near South Side of Chicago (Fig. 8). It removed one of the worst blighted areas of the city.

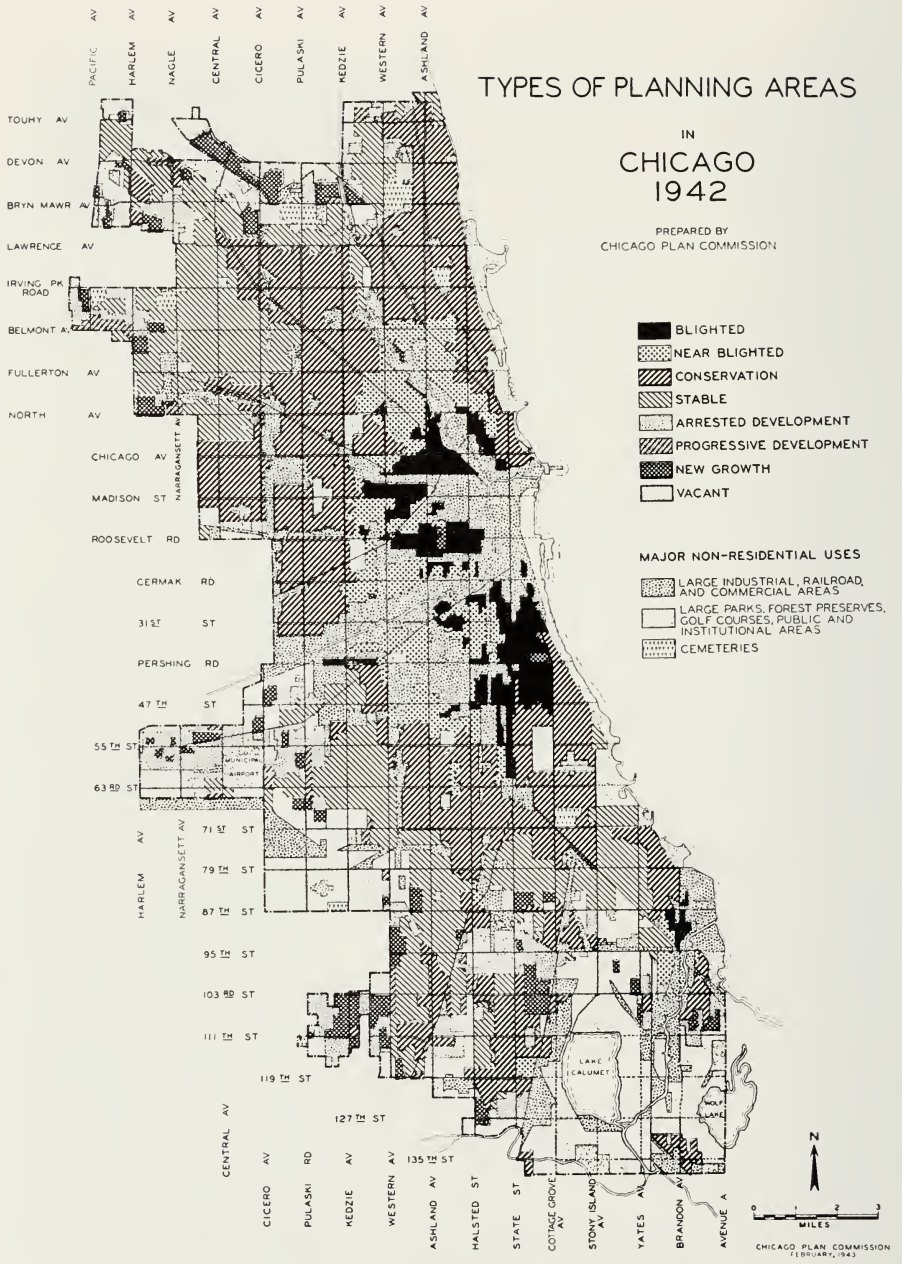

FIG. 7. Types of Planning Areas in Chicago, 1942. Various types of areas requiring specialized planning treatment include blighted, near-blighted, and conservation areas. All of these subsequently became eligible for "urban renewal" under Federal, State and local laws. Originally published in *Master Plan of Residential Land Use of Chicago,* Chicago Plan Commission, 1943.

FIG. 8. Apartment Buildings, Lake Meadows. This project was the first developed by private capital on land assembled and cleared by the Chicago Land Clearance Commission in accordance with a comprehensive plan. *Harold M. Mayer*

The land was completely cleared; several new apartment buildings and a neighborhood shopping center were built in accordance with a comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of the area. These structures, and the site plan which relates them to each other, embody many of the principles of modern neighborhood planning. The buildings are spaced far apart, resulting in a relatively low site coverage and density. In fact, the density is so low that the number of people to be rehoused in the area after redevelopment will be less than the number housed there before redevelopment began. This project is typical of those undertaken under the redevelopment powers such as the Land Clearance Act in Illinois, supported and encouraged by the Federal Housing acts of 1949 and 1954.

The concept of urban redevelopment, as evidenced by the Lake Meadows project, has both flaws and advantages. Recognition of some of the flaws has been responsible for the broadening of the concept of the renewal problem. On the positive side, the Lake Meadows project encouraged other renewal projects in the vicinity. The Illinois Institute of Technology and other institutions have engaged in large-scale land clearance and rehabilitation, both of nearby residential areas and of their own plants. Nearby Michael Reese Hospital has had for several years a full-time planning staff doing the same sort of renewal planning. The Chicago Housing Authority has built and is planning a number of large public housing projects in the vicinity. The South Side Planning Board, a privately supported agency with a professional staff, has been instrumental in coordinating the renewal plans for an area of several square miles on Chicago's near south side, involving these and other renewal projects; that area of the city is being rapidly transformed.

Such transformation, however, does not hold the complete, or perhaps even the best, answer to the problems of dilapidation and obsolescence of the inner areas of the city, nor does it necessarily facilitate the orderly process of urban growth and development.

The relocation problem is one of the aspects of urban renewal which has not been successfully solved. The densities of close-in areas after renewal are generally lower than the densities of the same areas before renewal. A considerable population resident in the area, as well as many business establishments, typically are displaced. In the case of projects involving the Land Clearance Commission a public obligation exists to relocate residents.

Many persons displaced in the course of urban renewal are unable to occupy the newly constructed units. On the one hand, privately financed projects aided by a public subsidy, such as Lake Meadows, have high rentals beyond the means of many families. On the other hand, the public housing projects set rigid maximum income limits that disqualify other families.

Many relocated persons are members of minority groups, particularly

Negro. Their re-housing constitutes a problem of special difficulty because, by custom and mores, if no longer by law, many areas of the city are closed to them. In other areas the process of economic selection comes into play, because Negroes and other minority groups contain a higher than average proportion of persons unable to pay for what is commonly considered decent housing.

The uprooting of people from the redevelopment areas means, in many instances, that they have to move outward toward the edge of the city. Population problems and pressure are created in adjacent parts of the city. Many of the migrants from the blighted areas are unable to pay an economic rent for decent housing, or they can pay for housing only by doubling up, or by occupying neglected properties. Many of the property owners, particularly those who do not live in the community, milk the properties for maximum profit by illegal conversions and other methods which increase densities beyond reasonable standards.

Chicago faces a critical series of decisions relating to the nature, scope, and location of its future activities in the field of urban renewal in the blighted areas.

Beyond the blighted and near-blighted areas are neighborhoods which were originally called "conservation" areas. In 1942, when the first Plan Commission study was published, the Commission staff found that about one-half of the residential area of the City of Chicago, housing approximately one-half of the city's population, was included in "conservation" areas. Originally these areas were considered to be not bad enough to justify "redevelopment" as the process was then called, but were not good enough to leave alone.

Excluded from the earlier thinking relative to redevelopment, they constitute important areas in the enlarged and expanded programs which are now called "urban renewal." Such areas are threatened by the encroachment of blight accelerated by the redevelopment of nearby blighted areas and the uprooting of the population from such areas. Conservation areas have suffered from the intrusions of land uses incompatible with those already there. They have been subjected to undesirable conversions and to excessive density. Repair and painting of buildings in conservation areas is far from sufficient to reclaim such areas.

Under the Federal Housing Act of 1954, such conservation areas are to be especially subject to close examination and to Federal aid to facilitate renewal by processes short of complete demolition and redevelopment. One of the first examples of such Federal aid is the granting of over six million dollars to facilitate the first renewal project in the Hyde Park area.

The problem of maintaining an existing community in need of partial renewal, in contrast to the complete replacement of a community by a new and entirely different one—Hyde Park in contrast to Lake Meadows—is a very difficult one.

FIG. 9. Edens Expressway. The construction of modern express highways results in an acceleration of the movement of population, commerce, and industry to suburban areas. *Harold M. Mayer*

FIG. 10. Multi-level parking garage in downtown Chicago. Consideration and planning of automobile terminals cannot be divorced from planning of automobile routes. This is one of ten multi-level parking structures recently completed by a public agency for private operation in central Chicago. *Harold M. Mayer*

3. Transportation

Another problem relative to which important decisions must be made is that of internal circulation within Chicago and the metropolitan area and of external transportation between Chicago and its hinterland.

Internal transportation is the factor which makes possible the differences in land use from place to place and consequently the specialization in the character of areas from one part of the city to another.

In recent years, transportation by private automobile has been increasing. A transformation of our way of life has resulted. But since cars are very wasteful of space, the automobile has produced problems of congestion. The handling of vast numbers of automobiles both in motion and at rest is a serious problem, especially in the central parts of cities. With the automobile has come the need for off-street parking facilities. If everyone coming into the central business district of Chicago traveled by automobile, as much additional floor area would be required for the parking of the cars in the central business district as now exists in all of the buildings. One of the principal reasons why a central business district can function is the proximity of the various establishments within the district to one another. That proximity would be reduced if the district had to double its present area in order to accommodate the parking of automobiles. The Chicago Transit Authority reports that on some of its routes in the central part of the city the travel time today is actually longer than in the horse-and-buggy and cable-car days. The reason, of course, is the saturation of streets with vehicular traffic.

The problem of through streets and expressways poses great difficulties. Throughout Chicago, traffic flows mainly on the section-line or half-section streets, a mile or a half-mile from each other. Widening of the street is not sufficient, because when the streets are widened, the mere widening encourages more people to use automobiles. The construction of expressways, many millions of dollars worth of which are under way in Chicago, is not the sole answer (Fig. 9). Experience elsewhere had indicated that as soon as an expressway is opened it becomes saturated with traffic and the streets adjacent to it do not lose any very substantial volume of traffic. Expressways encourage a further use of the automobile with more congestion in the focal areas of employment, shopping, and entertainment, and especially in the central business district. More millions of dollars must be put into multi-level structures of all kinds to handle the traffic (Fig. 10). Thus there is a spiral of more multi-decked garages both above and below the ground, more expressways, and more grade separations *ad infinitum*.

The respective roles and the interrelationships of public and private transportation must be re-studied. The public transit vehicle is the most efficient user of space, including street space. On the other hand, the best public transportation cannot match the convenience and comfort of the

automobile, or its flexibility. A comprehensive metropolitan transportation study is about to get under way.

Another series of problems involving decisions concerns the relationships between Chicago and the region for which it serves as the principal focus. These relationships are expressed principally in the form of accessibility, which is related to the flow of people and goods. Accessibility means transportation.

The four principal forms of transportation by which Chicago is accessible to its hinterland and to the other regions of the world are water, rail, air, and road.

Water transportation is a key asset of Chicago. The most significant current development is the St. Lawrence Seaway. Within four or five years it will bring to Chicago overseas vessels of much greater size and in much greater numbers than at present. Adequate port facilities must be provided. Harbors and channels must be dredged. There must be active work in accordance with a comprehensive port plan, an expansion in both area and scope of the plan which the Chicago Regional Port District is now effectuating.

A second development, the Calumet-Sag Channel enlargement, began late in 1955.

The third development, the comprehensive Lake Calumet Harbor, will need to be prosecuted with the utmost speed in order to have some of the required terminal facilities ready when the traffic is brought to Chicago in vastly greater volume by both the St. Lawrence and Calumet-Sag enlarged waterways.

Chicago has never squarely faced the issue whether parts of its Lake Michigan shoreline should properly be devoted to port uses. The city has some twenty miles of continuous lakefront park development. This is a unique and virtually priceless civic asset. But Chicago is paying the cost in many ways, not the least of which is preclusion of the major port development from the area most convenient for such shipping. Lake Calumet is surely not ideal as a port site; it is simply the best site still available. The preponderant bulk cargoes will flow naturally to the Calumet district. But it is estimated that upon completion of the Seaway over one million tons of mixed cargo will be available to potential terminals in the downtown harbor at and near the mouth of the Chicago River. Part of such cargo will be to and from the central part of the city and part will be for transshipment inland by barge, rail, and truck. General cargo consisting of package shipments or clean freight would not be incompatible with park development extending north and south from the mouth of the Chicago River. The potentiality of harbor and port terminal expansion along the downtown lakefront as supplementary to the Lake Calumet development should be considered.

FIG. 11. Dearborn Station yards. This area, just south of the central business district, has been the subject of almost continuous planning for consolidation of railroad facilities for more than half a century, without success. *Harold M. Mayer*

Part of the area suitable for such development is being removed by the construction of a 70-acre filtration plant just north of Navy Pier. Some studies have indicated that the location selected for the plant is only one of several potential locations with no particular cost advantage in its favor. Three million dollars were spent on engineering studies and upon foundation construction for the filtration plant before an injunction was secured to prevent further development of the plant. Later, a higher court reversed the decisions of the local court, and construction was resumed after an interruption of one year.

The construction of the North Side filtration plant illustrates the desirability of comprehensive city and regional planning, in which the competing demands for land uses at each location are related to one another. The port cannot go anywhere except on waterfronts, and the terminals and anchorages for any downtown port must be behind breakwater protection. Breakwater construction is extremely expensive. The breakwater-protected area is very limited, yet the filtration plant is being constructed in the very center of what was the principal anchorage area for the downtown lakefront harbor. Here we see the pressures generated by the proponents of one or another special interest excluding considerations of the competing demands for a scarce resource.

Rail transportation, like water transportation, is vital to Chicago's role as the metropolis of the Midwest. Railroad yards have been increasing in size. The average freight train is now about twice as long as it was a few years ago. Freight yards, therefore, require more extensive areas of land. It is not efficient to have a yard with tracks of insufficient length to assemble the longest freight trains operated by the particular railroad. In order to secure the necessary land, the freight classification yards have been moving toward the urban periphery; most of the major yards are now beyond the city limits of Chicago. Many of them, as was true in their former more central locations, are now being surrounded by built-up urban area. Their further expansion is being blocked. Some of the railroads have chosen to move their principal classification yards the distance of an entire operating division beyond the metropolitan area, in some cases as much as 150 to 200 miles outside the city. Smaller switching yards handle the local switching traffic within the city. There has also been a trend toward bypassing Chicago on so-called "gateway" traffic by using other less congested gateways, such as Peoria, for interchange between eastern and western railroads. This trend has very great implications for the changing land-use pattern of metropolitan Chicago, and should be recognized in the preparation of a city or metropolitan plan.

Local freight stations (Fig. 11), originally located by the necessity of horse and wagon ("team") access to the industrial and commercial establishments of the central business district, are moving to and beyond the edge of the city. The development of motor trucking, the rapid extension

of industries beyond the built-up areas of the city, and the development of new techniques of railroad transportation, such as the "piggy-back," have reduced the former necessity for railroads to maintain their major freight stations in the downtown area. It is quite possible that substantial areas of land can be reclaimed from railroads and made available for other uses in the relatively near future. The decisions relative to the future use of such land have important implications for the entire physical structure, and hence the efficiency, of the city.

Decisions relative to air traffic, too, are important to the efficiency with which Chicago performs its role. The Chicago Midway Airport is the busiest civil airport in the world. It is dangerously inadequate to handle the existing traffic. Chicago has a second municipal airport, O'Hare Field, capable of handling a substantial volume of commercial air traffic. It was opened to commercial airlines in late October, 1955. But various conflicting uses of that airport are retarding its development and utilization. For one thing, the military forces want to continue to use the field to base training planes, including high-speed jets. The traffic of civil aircraft and high-speed military aircraft is incompatible. The air force is planning to move a major part of its operations from O'Hare Field to a new site in southern Wisconsin within the next few years.

Regional and inter-regional highways constitute another field in which important decisions affecting Chicago's relations to the area it serves are being made, in some instances unwisely. This problem has been made acute by the superimposition of a system of toll highways upon the existing system of highways with inadequate considerations of the inter-relationships between the two systems or between the proposed toll system and other aspects of urban, metropolitan, and regional development.

The rise of motor trucking provides opportunities and poses problems of truck terminals in relation to adjacent land use and to accessibility to major truck routes into and out of the city.

Chicago is a city of critical decisions. By virtue of its excellent geographical location at the southwesternmost penetration of the Great Lakes into the agricultural heart of the nation, its man-made facilities such as railroads, roads, factories, stores, and offices, and its continuing activities in transportation, trade, and manufacturing, Chicago has become the economic and cultural center of the Middlewest. How this heritage will be further developed depends on a series of urgent decisions now facing the citizens of the Chicago Metropolitan Area.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
711.40973C42M C002
CHICAGO: CITY OF DECISIONS CHICAGO
3 0112 025318160